the Richmond Review

September 2023 RichmondSunsetNews.com FREE

Despite Pleas, Geary Blvd. Quick-Build Project OK'd

By Thomas K. Pendergast

Between 15th and 25th avenues along Geary Boulevard are at least 34 empty storefronts, so it is no surprise that merchants still hanging on are under stress wondering if they might close as well.

What is called the "heart" of this Richmond District commercial corridor was already struggling even before the pandemic, which then made everything worse.

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's (SFMTA) plan to convert angled parking to parallel parking as part of the agency's quick-build project for improving traffic safety and reducing travel time on the 38-Geary bus line has become an issue of extraordinary interest and vitriol.

Complicating the issue is the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's (SFPUC) plan to rip up the street and replace aging sewage and water lines starting in 2025. The survival of these businesses through the construction is a major concern for many in the business community.

The main issue of the moment, however, is that angled parking generally provides more parking spaces than parallel parking, so many merchants asked the agency to delay the changes until after the SFPUC does its work.

That was the motivation for local merchants and community members to hold a mock funeral on the day before a critical vote by the SFMTA Board of Directors for some of the more prominent businesses of the recent past that have closed.

At this event, former District 1 Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer asked why it is so urgent to do this now instead of later.

"We know that the 38 ridership is down from pre-pandemic levels; they haven't

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Artist Brings Academy of Sciences' Dinosaurs to Life

Local artist Yukari Sakura's work adorns a variety of merchandise found in the gift shop at the California Academy of Sciences. Sakura has been fascinated by art since she was 3 years old and has been interested in dinosaurs since her early days visiting the Academy. Story on page 4. *Photo by Kate Quach.*

Richmond Review Marks 35 Years Serving Community

By Asha Ingram

With this October marking the 35th anniversary of the Richmond Review, Paul Kozakiewicz sure has a lot to look back on as the original owner. It is impossible to look back on the history of the newspaper without his insight. He was, and still is today, an integral part of the paper.

Kozakiewicz started the Richmond Review newspaper in 1988 to serve the community. For the next 30 years – with significant help from his wife, Sue – he would run the Richmond Review and the Sunset Beacon, the newspaper he and partner Chris Rivers started in 1991.

Since its start, the Richmond Review has covered just about every kind of news and feature story in the neighborhood. Throughout the years the paper has also been a vehicle for citizens and organizations to share their points of view and ideas.

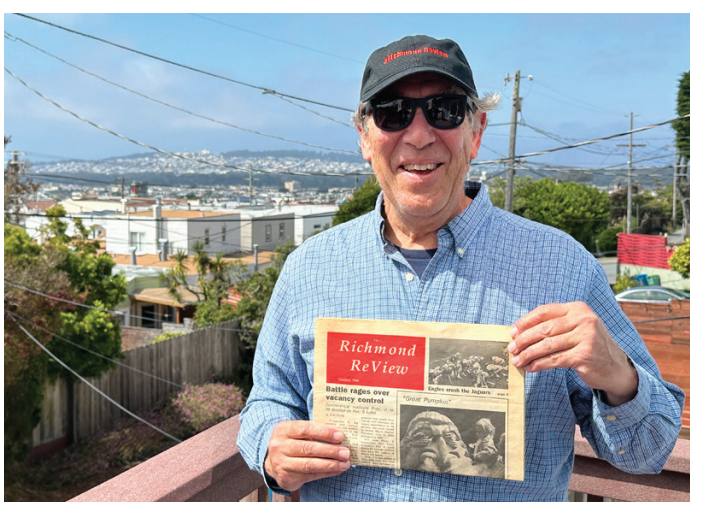
Some of the important issues covered in the Richmond Review over the decades are: The University of California's attempt to put "wet labs" at its Laurel Hills campus; extensive coverage of the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake; the conversion of The Presidio from an Army post to a national park; the rise of district elections; the fight over "Richmond Specials;" changes to a multitude of transit lines; the mural controversy at George Washington High School; the lack of adequate water lines for firefighting after an earthquake and fire; numerous changes at Golden Gate Park, including the recent banning of vehicles along the eastern end of John F. Kennedy Drive; and the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on local businesses.

"We have always been a training ground for budding journalists," Kozakiewicz said. "We have been blessed with some really good photographers over the years, like Philip Liborio Gangi, and writers, including Thomas K. Pendergast, covering our neighborhood."

One of Kozakiewicz's biggest catalysts for taking on a monthly paper was the creation of desktop publishing around 1985. The new technology made publishing newspapers much quicker and more efficient. It also helped burgeoning business owners like Kozakiewicz to be able to produce the paper without a lot of traditional labor, like a typesetter and layout production person, expenses that were required with traditional publishing.

"It was really the thing that catapulted the smaller guys in the business," he said. "At one time in the late '90s, we had 17 neighborhood newspapers in the City. Now we're down to seven."

Even though the Richmond District to some people seems like a quieter part of the City, the paper was never short of stories to cover. Kozakiewicz said there was always something interesting going on in the neighborhood.



Paul Kozakiewicz holds a copy of the first edition of the Richmond Review, the newspaper he founded in 1988. The Richmond District is visible over his right shoulder in this recent photo taken on the back deck of his Sunset District home. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

"When we first started the paper, they were like 'What are you going to write about in the sleepy little Richmond?' But there's always been plenty to write about," Kozakiewicz recalled. "We're a melting pot of all kinds of people. It's an ideal location and the commercial corridors are fantastic."

It did not always come easy running two papers that were published monthly. With so many moving parts, Kozakiewicz had to be nimble to help the paper succeed.

"Every day was a challenge, that's why it was such a great job," he explained.

Getting advertisements also required a bit of effort. When the paper was first established, people were not always so eager to get their ad in the paper.

"I knocked on doors and walked up and down the streets, talked to people and built relationships," Kozakiewicz recalled. "Our local businesses have always supported the neighborhood."

In 2019, Kozakiewicz retired and sold both papers to Michael Durand, the current publisher and editor of the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers and RichmondSunsetNews.com website. Kozakiewicz still copy edits both papers every month, but Durand has been carrying on the journalistic tradition. Kozakiewicz's wife, Sue, is still handling the bookkeeping for both papers.

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Looking Back

Kinen Carvala

GG Park on Film

What's an example of a movie filmed in Golden Gate Park that clearly showed the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum building in its second version before it was rebuilt in 2005?

Were it not for the California State Legislature approving the creation of Golden Gate Park on April 4, 1870, San Francisco's westside sand dunes might not have been transformed into a movie director's delight.

The following examples of movies filmed in Golden Gate Park for some or many scenes include various genres: neo-noir, romantic comedy, biography, comedy-mystery, romantic drama, crime drama, mockumentary, drama, noir and silent.

The noir genre in the view of Eddie Muller, expressed in an article on the Turner Classic Movies website, presents the main character "acting out of desperate desire, does something he (or she) knows is wrong, but they do it anyway … and reap the dire consequences." The noir genre's heyday was in the mid-20th century.

"Girl in Golden Gate Park" is a 2021 independent neo-noir film starring Erin Mei-Ling Stuart and Kim Jiang Dubaniewicz and directed by J.P. Allen. Golden Gate Park locations in the film include the Polo Field, Big Rec. handball courts, Stow Lake and the Music Concourse, with the Cider Press, Turtle Sundial and de Young Museum visible. Filming was completed just before COVID-19, according to writer Noma Faingold at richmondsunsetnews.com.

"Always Be My Maybe," a 2019 romantic comedy starring Ali Wong and Randall Park and directed by Nahnatchka Khan, includes a stroll past the Rideout Fountain in the Music Concourse.

"The Wedding Planner," a 2001 romantic comedy starring Jennifer Lopez and Matthew McConaughey, was directed by Adam Shankman. The film uses the interior of the Japanese Tea Garden. The Spreckels Temple of Music sequence features a wedding band playing.

"Play It Again, Sam," a 1972 romantic comedy starring Woody Allen and Diane Keaton, was directed by Herbert Ross. It shows the leads walking among green benches in the Music Concourse.

"The Pursuit of Happyness" is a 2006 biographical drama starring Will and Jaden Smith. It was directed by Gabriele Muccino and shows the leads in the Koret Children's Quarter, also known as Children's Playground, before the playground was remodeled and reopened in 2007.

"Charlie Chan and the Curse of the Dragon Queen," a 1981 comedy-mystery film starring Peter Ustinov and a large cast and directed by Paul Baxley includes horse-and-buggy chases and archery scenes through Golden Gate Park, including a shot on JFK Drive approaching Ocean Beach. The Association of Asian/Pacific American Artists (A.A.P.A.A) in a document titled "Charlie Chan Haunts Again !!!" criticized the film for white actors playing Asian characters, comparing the practice to blackface and objecting to Charlie Chan being stereotypically portrayed.

"The Competition," is a 1980 romantic drama starring Richard Dreyfuss and Amy Irving and directed by Joel Oliansky. It is a story about competing pianists at the California Academy of Sciences (which was used as the competition venue). In the Music Concourse, the Rideout Fountain, Spreckels Temple of Music and the de Young Museum are also visible. The Academy of Sciences was renovated in 2005-2008 and the de Young Museum was later reconstructed in 2005.

"Dirty Harry," a 1971 crime drama starring Clint Eastwood and directed by Don Siegel, uses Kezar Stadium, which was remodeled in 1989 and is not the same as the stadium currently on the site. The film was added to the U.S. National Film Registry in 2012.

"Take The Money and Run," a 1969 mockumentary starring Woody Allen and Janet Margolin and directed by Woody Allen, features the leads near Spreckels Lake.

"Petulia" is a 1968 drama starring Julie Christie and George C. Scott and directed by Richard Lester. The film features a rendezvous in the Japanese Tea Garden before moving on to the Music Concourse, where the Spreckels Temple of Music and the pre-renovated Academy of Sciences are visible, as pointed out at the blog Reel SF.

"Golden Gate Girl," a 1941 drama Chinese-language film made in San Francisco and exhibited in Chinatown, was reviewed in "Variety" at the time, which named Golden Gate Park as one of the locations of the film. The film was directed by Esther Eng, "the first and, for many decades, only female Chinese film director," according to "Variety" in 1995. Bruce Lee debuted in the film as a two-month-old, according to Matthew Polly's biography. Summer 2023 is the 50th anniversary of Bruce Lee's first starring role in a Hollywood movie, "Enter the Dragon" and his sudden death.

"The Lady from Shanghai," a 1947 noir film starring Orson Welles and Rita Hayworth and directed by Orson Wells, features the leads in the Steinhart Aquarium of the California of Sciences (prior to its remodeling in 2005-2008). The film was released after the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943. The film features many Chinese extras, in Chinatown scenes on the street, in the Chinese Telephone Exchange (now East West Bank) and a performance of Chinese opera in a theater. The film was added to the U.S. National Film Registry in 2018. The colloquial nickname "Frisco" is used for San Francisco in the movie. Since the late 19th century, "Frisco" has been used and also derided as vulgar, according to references compiled by Dave Gilson for "Mother Jones," though Vinnee Tong writing for KQED in 2017 noted that some locals still say "Frisco," including the owners of Frisco Tattoo in the Mission District.

"Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall," a 1923 silent film starring Mary Pickford and directed by Marshall Neilan, was filmed in Golden Gate Park according to the American Film Institute.

"A Jitney Elopement" is a 1915 silent film with Charlie Chaplin both as director and star in a car chase in front of the Murphy Windmill and on a dirt road that would later become the Great Highway in 1929, according to Rae Alexandra writing for KQED. The Murphy Windmill underwent restoration in 2002.

Find an archive of Looking Back columns about some of the locations and monuments seen in the above movies at richmondSunsetNews.com.

Golden Gate Park has been the backdrop in a lot of movies. Pictured above is the Rideout Fountain in the Music Concourse which was in San Francisco native Ali Wong's 2019 film, "Always Be My Maybe." In the background is the California Academy of Sciences which, along with the Rideout Fountain, played a part in the 1980 Richard Dreyfus film, "The Competition," among other films. ***Photo by Michael Durand.***

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RichmondSunsetNews.com Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief: Michael Durand
Editor: Paul Kozakiewicz
Writers: Linda Badger, Erin Bank, Noma Faingold, Jonathan Farrell, Asha Ingram, Judith Kahn, Clarisse Kim, Beth Lederer, Thomas K. Pendergast, Jack Quach, Kate Quach, Alyson Wong
Photographers: Tyrone Bartoli, Noma Faingold, Clarisse Kim, Kate Quach, Thomas K. Pendergast, Alyson Wong
Cartoonist: Paul Kilduff
Columnists: Kinen Carvala, Supervisor Connie Chan, Brian Quan, Judge Quentin L. Kopp (ret.), John M. Lee, Julie Pitta, Assemblymember Phil Ting
Bookkeeper: Sue Kozakiewicz **Intern:** Michael D. Wong
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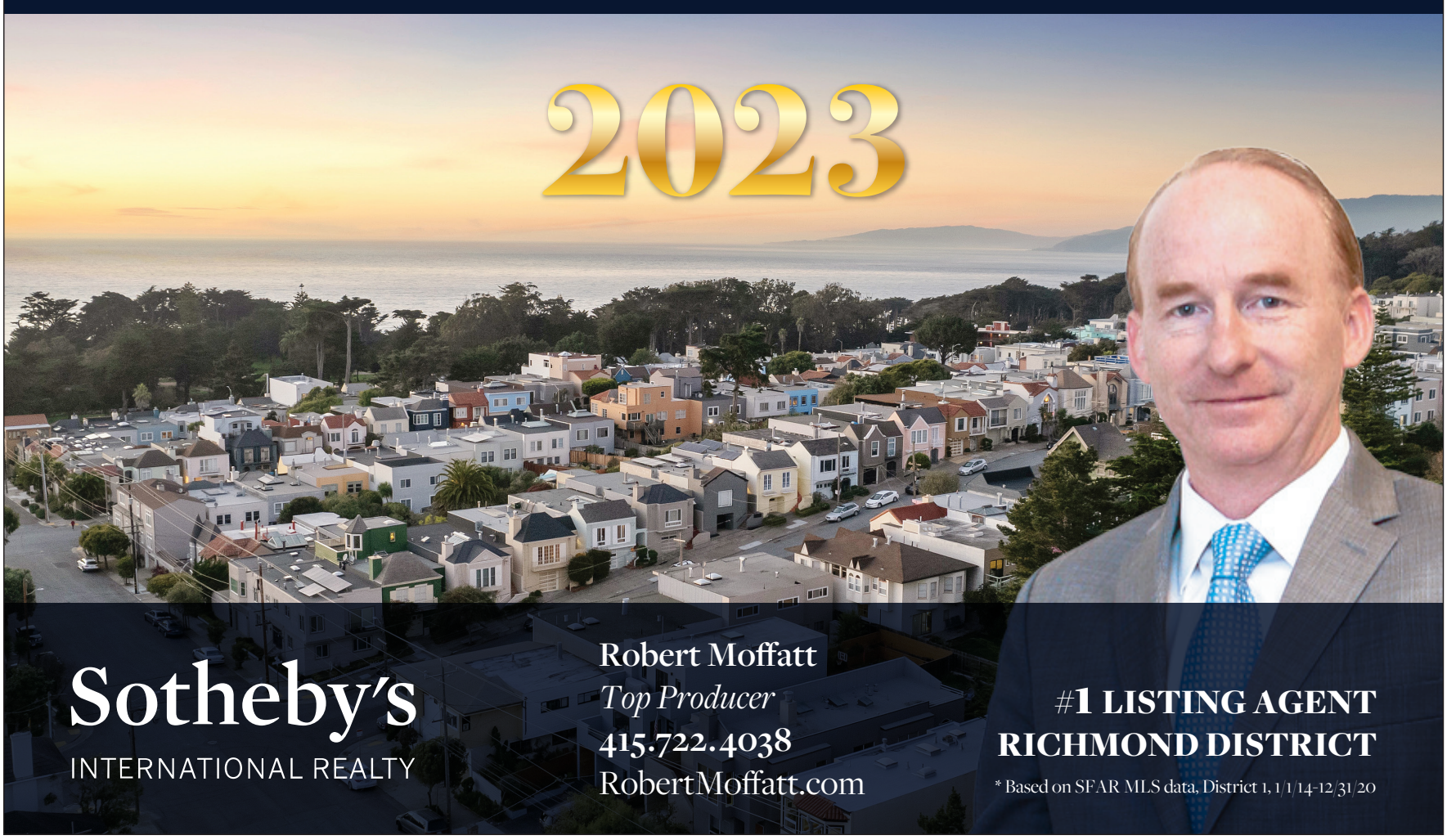

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Local Artist Yukari Sakura's Dinosaur Images Featured at Cal. Academy

By Kate Quach

Splatters of paint flurry across a navy-blue apron. A thin brush slips between fingers and swashes a kaleidoscope of colors on a canvas. With sleeves rolled to her elbows, Yukari Sakura leans close and settles a careful gaze over the page. While her focus never seems to lift, a smile splashes across her face as she sees her art pieces coming to life.

Spikes, claws and stretching long necks. Dinosaurs pose, alive with striking colors, baring jagged sets of teeth and flaunting stripes down their backs. Pointed tails thrash amidst a speckled background while horns splay in every direction. Sakura's vibrant dinosaurs, which once lay still on an art studio workspace, break away from the page and seem to burst through the doors of the California Academy of Sciences.

This summer, the Golden Gate Park museum revealed "The World's Largest Dinosaurs" exhibition, featuring models of towering, prehistoric beasts of the sauropod species. Marveling through the exhibit, open until Jan. 21, 2024, visitors to San Francisco's Academy of Sciences often cast their gazes upwards at the long-necked, herbivorous sauropods.

Visitors' hands hurry to interact with fossil replicas of larger-than-life bones. Their eyes peer into the intricacies of the giants' unique digestive system, and faces brighten in awe of the life-size respiratory and heart networks.

After gazing at the Jurassic creatures looming over their heads, museum guests find themselves in the merchandise store. Here, each shelf and rack is lined with custom items ranging from baby onesies to hoodies to tote bags — all adorned with Sakura's artwork, in full color.

Thirty-three-year-old Sakura, who grew up in the Sunset District, discovered her unshakable love for art when she was just 3 years old. While she experimented in different mediums and paints, a favored focus for her pieces quickly emerged. She loved animals. Trips with her parents to the California Academy of Sciences filled her childhood days as she waved to the butterflies, penguins and fishes with seemingly limitless energy.

But one type of animal loomed above the rest — one which began its last march on the earth 65 million years ago. Dinosaurs became her passion. The long-extinct animals fueled Sakura's fascination. Dinosaur toys romped around her, adventuring through her imagination as she watched "The Land Before Time" films on repeat.

"My experience in the Academy when I was growing up as a child and watching movies about dinosaurs gave me many happy memories," recalled Sakura.

In 2011, after graduating high school through the San Francisco Special Education programs, Sakura found immediate support for her artistic abilities in an organization known as Creativity Explored. Established in 1983, the foundation opened its doors to artists with disabilities, providing opportunities for students to present their artwork in galleries and open for sale. Sakura immersed herself in art, refining her technique while staying true to her sharp perceptiveness of color and fondness for animals. For Sakura, she had Creativity Explored to thank for connecting her work with the California Academy of Sciences.

"The Academy has had a long-standing partnership working with the developmentally disabled community," said Carl Lieber, director of Guest Operations at the Academy. "I think the whole partnership came about through our desire and opportunity to tell a local story and highlight art from within the community."

When Sakura's pieces became the main merchandise feature of The World's Largest Dinosaurs, Lieber recalled a special feeling of enthusiasm rising within himself and his fellow coworkers, who were all captured by the colorful individuality of Sakura's illustration. The Academy's guests have held similar impressions. Since the exhibition's introduction, Lieber has noticed visitors young and old gravitating towards the T-shirts and caps emblazoned with Sakura's art.

Yukari Sakura poses with a model of an Argentinosaurus, one of the sources of inspiration for her artwork featured at the California Academy of Sciences. Sakura is sporting a bag with a print of her designs. *Photo by Kate Quach.*

Early into the exhibit's opening on May 26, Lieber and staff of the institute embraced Sakura with a welcoming tour. The museum director became filled with emotion watching Sakura's face light up in pure joy when she saw her artwork displayed throughout the store.

"I was trying to hide tears back," Lieber said. "It was just awesome to see somebody realizing their creation is out in the world and seeing others in the public responding to their art."

Back at Creativity Explored, Sakura's mentors were equally as impressed by her capabilities. Laura Figa, a teaching artist at the studio, works one-on-one with artists with disabilities. In the workshop classes, Figa often finds Sakura absorbed in her independent style, researching endangered animal species and crafting paintings based off of her discoveries.

"In her solitary practice, she is independently driven," Figa said.

This drive crystallizes in the messages the artist includes in her work: Sakura's care for animals inspires her to incorporate awareness for endangered species in her pieces.

"By researching the animals and knowing that they need help, we have to protect their habitats," Sakura said.

Peeking over Sakura's shoulder, Figa would ask about the creatures emerging out of brushstrokes and onto her canvas. Sakura, with no hesitation, would share in-depth facts about the subjects of her paintings, from the animal's region of origin to the meanings behind her color choice.

"There's always a story behind each work," Figa said. "Nothing is arbitrary, everything has a background on what she decides to work on."

Telling the story behind each work is no figure of speech. For Francis Kohler, lead teacher in Person-Centered Services at Creativity Explored, the true elements of Sakura's pieces appear once he flips the artwork over. Behind, she fills the blank space with handwritten descriptions of the threatened animal for viewers to read.

Sakura's constant openness to inform others of vulnerable species radiates through her pieces.

"She has this encyclopedic knowledge of which animals are in the endangered category and all the delineations of how these animals are being kept track of," Kohler said.

Navigating through realistic pet portrait commissions to memorial events in U.S. history portrayed through cartoon-style, whimsical mythological creatures, Kohler noted his amazement in Sakura's sweeping realm of artistic abilities. Now, in her work with the Academy's The World's Largest Dinosaurs exhibit, her pieces continue to "stand out from the rest," adds Lieber.

"Through her artistic lens, you're seeing something that didn't exist before," Kohler said. "For Yukari, the sky's the limit."

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Assembly

Assemblymember Phil Ting

Celebrate the Autumn Moon

Schools are back in session, signaling that summer is winding down. The change in seasons is noted in a variety of ways. On the west side, fall means it's time for the Richmond District Autumn Moon Festival – 2023 marks this event's seventh year and its success is a testament to how important this is to the community.

Please join me and District 1 Supervisor Connie Chan as we host this year's festivities on Saturday, Sept. 9, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Booths, entertainment, delicious food and more will line Clement Street between Seventh and 10th avenues.

Because it is the Year of the Rabbit, there will be a bunny contest, too. Do you have one? Please bring your beloved pet and compete for prizes. Categories include Best in Show, Most Talented, Best Costume and the Bunny/Pet Owner who look the most alike. I can't wait to see the winners.

I also invite you to stop by my office's booth. My staff will be there to answer questions and provide information on how state government can serve you. We'll have an update on my legislative accomplishments and information on resources, like mental health, food security and housing.

Our celebration is deeply rooted in Asia's Mid-Autumn Festival. The Chinese have been celebrating the autumn harvest's full moon since the Shang Dynasty in the second millennium B.C., and the tradition has spread throughout other countries in Southeast Asia. It's seen as a time to reflect on the bounty of the summer harvest, the fullness of the moon and the myth of the immortal moon goddess Chang-O.

The Zhuang people of southern China, the largest minority in the country, share an ancient fable of how the sun and the moon are a couple and the stars are their children. The moon's pregnancy makes it round, and it becomes a crescent after giving birth.

The Autumn Moon holiday is often considered a "Chinese Thanksgiving" because gratitude and the inclusion of food – including the popular moon cake – lie at the center of these celebrations.

For years here in San Francisco, the celebration was held in Chinatown. My staff worked with local groups and leaders to bring autumn moon festivals to our side of the City, including the Sunset – neighborhoods that many Chinese and other Asian communities who celebrate this holiday call home. Community Youth Center, Richmond Neighborhood Center and the Clement Street Merchants Association deserve much of the credit for leading the charge. Today, it's gratifying to see how this event has grown into a thriving destination.

I additionally want to acknowledge our sponsors whose monetary donations help us with expenses associated with the festival, as well as our media sponsors who spread the word about this event. And, of course, the invaluable support from numerous allies and volunteers are worth recognizing.

I hope you will join us on Sept. 9 for a fun, family-friendly event that will showcase the cultural diversity of the west side. Note: the festival is accessible by Muni bus routes 1, 28, 38, 38R and 43.

See you there!

Phil Ting represents the 19th Assembly District, which includes the west side of San Francisco along with the communities of Broadmoor, Colma and Daly City as well as part of South San Francisco. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

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Real Estate

John M. Lee

What Will Fall Bring Us?

As a student of real estate my entire life, 2023 holds special interest for me as this prolonged real estate cycle has changed. Normally in September I write about what we can expect in our fall real estate market because it marks the start of our second selling season of the year in San Francisco.

Our two best seasons are spring, from February to June, and then fall, after Labor Day, from September to Thanksgiving. Our summers are normally slow because many people take vacations, which means that buyers, sellers and agents are out of town, delaying the buying or selling decision until they get back. There are also many weekend events, such as the SF Marathon and Outside Lands Music Festival, during the summer that takes the focus off of real estate.

Our July median sales price for single-family homes in San Francisco is at $1.55 million, down 16.2% year over year! This number started turning negative last year. The sales volume is down about 30%. Months of inventory is at three months, meaning it will take about three months to sell all the listings currently on the market, still a fairly low number.

In many ways, this is a confusing market with many experts disagreeing on where this market will go. On one side, you have the pessimist who is saying that we just started a major correction. Our market has gone straight up the last 12 years and this type of appreciation is not sustainable. With inflation back, interest rates still inching up and the stock market uncertain, we are looking at a further price decline.

On the other side, you have experts arguing that our economy is still doing well, our unemployment is down, people are recovering from the pandemic, inflationary pressure appears to be moderating, interest rates have gone up, but the Feds have signaled the end is near, and consumer confidence is up.

Also, since the mortgage crisis, banks have tightened up their underwriting. And with the appreciation of the last 12 years, people have more equity in their homes and can sustain a larger price decline. So even if prices do drop, homeowners do not need to sell and will ride the cycle out. This suggests that even though there is pressure on home prices, it will not be too severe.

Both sides have legitimate reasons for their beliefs. Nobody has said the appreciation of a few years ago is around the corner yet.

This brings the question of what will happen in the fall? I think it will be more of the same as the real estate market does not stop. There will always be people who buy and people who sell. Because of the lower prices and many sellers have low mortgage rates either because they recently purchased the property or refinanced it, they are reluctant to sell and thus this will keep the listing inventory low. Prices are dependent on the supply and demand balance, so this helps to stabilize prices and prevent them from falling too much.

Richmond Homes Sold in August*

Address	Bed	Bath	Sq. Ft.	Price
415 40th Ave.	4	4	1,745	$2,030,000
235 14th Ave.	5	4.5	4,115	4,800,000

**Partial listing. Source: M.L.S.*

A larger area of concern is the investment market where the interest rates are higher and insurance is difficult to get; plus, the property most likely is under rent control, limiting revenue increases. Many are lingering on the market searching for the correct price point in today's market, and I believe that there will be buying opportunities in this segment of the market.

What does this mean for the consumer? The best advice is to work with a real estate professional who is on top of the market to provide you with the insights necessary to fulfill your goals in this changing marketplace.

For sellers, though the prices have dropped, these are still very high prices we are looking at in San Francisco. With buyers still out there, if priced and marketed correctly, you should still be able to sell at a good price. For buyers, I recommend proceeding with caution. Currently prices are still high, but you are buying at lower prices than previous years and when the interest rates do come down, you can always refinance the loan and come out further ahead. I urge buyers to consider all factors before purchasing.

For people who are looking to trade up, this market is presenting an interesting opportunity to reposition your real estate portfolio for the long term as competition for properties is less than before.

This will be an interesting fall selling season and should give us a taste of how the market will be going into 2024!

John M. Lee is a broker with Compass specializing in the Richmond and Sunset districts. If you have any real estate questions, call him at 415-465-0505 or email at johnlee@isellsf.com. Find an archive of John M. Lee's columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Legacy Business Blue Danube Serves Up 'Cups of Good Feelings'

By Clarisse Kim

Nestled on the corner of Clement and Fourth Street, the Blue Danube Coffee House beckons people in with its brightly colored paint job and flowering parklet. In contrast, the interior is the definition of bohemian style – vintage furniture and eclectic decorations turn the room into a one-of-a-kind Inner Richmond gem.

What passersby and customers might not know, however, is that the Blue Danube has served the neighborhood for more than 40 years with history that can only be described as dynamic.

The cafe was originally founded in 1979 by Roger Bernhardt. Named after Bernhardt's favorite song, the Blue Danube cycled through four owners before being bought by Jimmy Hsu in 2003.

"In 2003, I owned the business with a partner," Hsu said. "After a year or so, I took over the business by myself. It's just been me for more than 10 years now."

As the fifth and current owner, Hsu adds his own personal flair to the cafe. He has "touched up" the coffee house's mystical feel and contributed his own dishes to the menu. Before the pandemic, Hsu also used to host poetry, comedy and music nights at the cafe, as well as weddings and other parties. The cafe doubles as a gallery for local art, which helps local artists sell their work.

"We just wanted to make the Blue Danube a place where the community could have fun," Hsu said.

In 2021, the cafe's deep and long-standing ties to the community earned it the status of legacy business. The Legacy Business Program of San Francisco gives this designation to historical and culturally impactful businesses. Created in 2015, the program supports small businesses with grants, business and marketing help, as well as recognition from the City.

The Blue Danube prides itself in selling traditional and local coffee alongside colorful juices and a wide array of meals. Customer favorites include the Mexican hot chocolate and Hulk smoothie. The breakfast bagels, house salad and rosemary chicken are also house specialties.

"We pack in a lot on the menu," Hsu said. "We're like a restaurant – we offer a lot of wholesome dishes in addition to our drinks."

But above all, the cafe's philosophy centers around the customer. Hsu said that he wants his customers to feel good about what they are drinking and who they are buying from.

Jimmy Hsu runs the Blue Danube Coffee House on Clement Street at Fourth Avenue. Sept. 26 marks Hsu's 20th year of ownership. The legacy business has been operating since 1979. *Photo by Clarisse Kim.*

"The way I see it, the coffee is free," Hsu said. "You're paying three dollars to feel good – we're serving cups of good feelings!"

Hsu states that the staff is a driving force behind this philosophy; members are encouraged to give every dish their all and to provide the best service possible.

"The staff is amazing. We're like a family." Hsu said. "They make honest drinks and dishes they feel good about, and they've helped the business in so many ways."

However, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic still linger. Like other small businesses, Hsu has struggled to stay open. He was forced to shorten his business hours and cut back on hosting community events.

Despite the challenges, Hsu remains optimistic, saying that the Blue Danube has adapted to a new trend of coffee culture. Customers are now sitting down to wait for their coffee instead of grabbing a cup to go, a habit caused by an increasingly remote workforce. Now that more people are working at home, people have the means and time to visit a cafe to do their work.

"The Blue Danube is a place where a lot of people sit down with their laptop and coffee to get work done," Hsu said. "We're now a popular bridge between home and work. Our daytime business is doing better than before."

In terms of the future, Hsu is in the process of extending the Blue Danube's lease, which ends in April, 2024. He hopes he gets a good term going forward into 2024. He also hopes that other small businesses, especially local eateries, will continue to regain their bearings despite declining nightlife.

"I was driving down Clement Street on a Thursday night, and it felt so quiet and dead." Hsu said. "It's not what it used to be; I hope those mom-and-pop shops fully recover soon."

Hsu is especially excited to celebrate two major milestones later this month. In September or October, Hsu plans on helping his wife, Ashley Zografos, and her partner, Ashlee Thompson open a bakery called Batches Bakehouse.

Also, on Sept. 26, Hsu will have owned the Blue Danube for exactly 20 years. To celebrate his 20th anniversary, Hsu plans on giving free coffee and baked goods from Batches Bakehouse to all customers.

"I want to celebrate and appreciate all our customers," Hsu said. "Thank you for allowing us to be here for 20 years and counting!"

The Blue Danube Coffee House is at 306 Clement St., near the corner of Fourth Avenue. To learn more, visit bluedanube.square.site. To learn more about the Legacy Business Program, visit sf.gov/legacy-business-program.

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POLICE BLOTTER

Robbery with Force, 1000 Block of Point Lobos Avenue, July 22, 8:16 p.m.

A tourist was walking back to his vehicle when he saw the suspect smash his car window, pull out his backpack, then jump in the driver's seat of a double-parked getaway vehicle.

The victim followed the suspect to the driver's seat and tried to retrieve his backpack. The suspect took off and dragged the victim about 200 feet down the street until the victim let go.

The victim reported seeing two additional suspects sitting in back seat of the vehicle while he was being dragged.

The victim sustained mild abrasions to both feet and refused medical treatment.

Loss was the backpack with a laptop, tablet and documents totaling an estimated value of $2,000. The getaway vehicle used was silver four-door Honda Accord.

The case was assigned to SFPD Burglary Unit which is conducting the follow-up investigation.

Robbery with a Gun, 900 Block of JFK Drive, July 26, 8:40 p.m.

The victim and his wife were walking near Stow Lake on JFK Drive when three suspects started following them. The victims stopped on sidewalk to let the suspects pass. All three suspects brandished handguns and pointed them at the victims.

Suspect one told the victims, "Give me everything you have." In fear, the victim threw his phone, wallet and keys to the ground. Suspect one then walked up to the victim and pistol whipped him in the head.

The victim fell to ground. Suspect one put the barrel of the gun against the victim's stomach and asked, "You gave me everything?" The victim did not have anything else and the three suspects then took the items and fled on foot.

The victim did not lose consciousness and was bleeding from the head.

The case assigned to the SFPD Robbery Unit which is conducting the follow-up investigation.

Theft: 200 Block of 24th Avenue, July 28, 12:30 p.m.

A U.S. Postal Service mail carrier was delivering a package when suspect one approached the victim and grabbed her work keys that were on a chain at her hip. As the suspect pulled on the keys, the chain broke. The victim screamed and suspects one and two fled on foot.

The loss was the USPS work keys that can unlock numerous apartment doors, USPS blue mailboxes and the victim's work vehicle.

The case was assigned to the SFPD Burglary Unit which is conducting the follow up investigation.

Arson, Malicious Mischief, Vandalism to Property: 400 Block of Stanyan Street, Aug. 7, 6:02 a.m.

Park Station officers responded to St. Mary's Hospital regarding a report of an unknown male who locked himself in a bathroom and the smell of smoke coming from the bathroom.

When they arrived, officers were directed by the security guard to the bathroom located near the ER. They could smell a strong odor of smoke as they approached the bathroom.

The security guard used a key to unlock the bathroom door after the subject refused to exit the bathroom. After the officer opened the door, the subject exited the bathroom and was detained without further incident.

Responding officers saw that there was water on the floor in the bathroom, a burned roll of toilet paper, a roll of paper towels on the ground, a paper towel dispenser that was ripped off the wall and was on the floor, a cracked fire strobe light and multiple holes on the sheetrock wall. Officers also noticed that behind the door was a broken metal railing blocking the door from fully opening. The toilet had multiple pieces of burned residue inside, and inside the garbage can was a burned blanket.

The subject was arrested and booked at County Jail.

Trespassing, Resisting, Delaying or Obstructing Peace Officer Duties: 400 Block of Stanyan Street, Aug. 16, 9 a.m.

Park Station officers responded to St. Mary's Hospital regarding a report of a discharged patient who was refusing to leave the lobby area.

When they arrived, officers informed the subject that he needed to leave the building. The subject then began screaming and lying on the ground.

Officers placed the subject into handcuffs to escort the subject out of the premise. However, the subject began dragging his legs on the ground.

Once outside, the officers removed the handcuffs from the subject. The subject then pulled the fire alarm by the emergency room entrance and began running through vehicular traffic.

For the subject's safety, officers subdued the subject and subsequently summoned a medic.

During the course of physical resistance, an officer sustained an injury to his left thumb, which was subsequently evaluated by a doctor.

The subject was cited for trespassing and resisting and delaying peace officer duties.

Find an archive of Police Blotter columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

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Commentary

Quentin L. Kopp

Murder Charges for Fentanyl Dealers

Words of wisdom include the observation that a criminal doesn't care who makes the laws of this country so long as they are not enforced.

After declining from 54 in June, 71 people died of overdoses in July from fentanyl and "Tranq." ABC News reported that the California Highway Patrol seized last month enough fentanyl in the Tenderloin to kill 2.1 million people! With San Francisco Superior Court judges appointed by California's governor, prosecution of fentanyl purveyors arrested by police officers or the CHP constitutes a game of chance in the Hall of Justice. (Local judges are permissive!)

Now, however, some county prosecutors are treating fentanyl deaths as murder. Riverside County's D.A., Mike Hestrin, has prosecuted the most cases in the state, despite the difficulty. Pursuing second-degree murder charges requires prosecutors to persuade all 12 jurors that the defendant dealer was aware fentanyl would kill the victim. Hestrin declared, "Just the change in attitude of 'We're going to look at this as a homicide investigation' has made all the difference."

San Bernardino, Orange, San Diego, Kern and Fresno counties are now also attacking fentanyl death cases as second-degree murder. Los Angeles, the largest county in California, naturally doesn't. Why not? Because George Gascón is the district attorney who, like recalled S.F. prosecutor Chesa Boudin, portrays the "system" at fault, not the criminal suppliers of the deadly drug.

I'm pleased our capable district attorney, Brooke Jenkins, Esq., stated last fall her office will prosecute drug dealers of fentanyl for murders, sending such an unmistakable message to local judges and San Franciscans. Placer County's D.A. achieved the first murder conviction of a fentanyl dealer in California – a 21-year-old man who supplied it to a 15-year-old Roseville girl. Sacramento County's new chief prosecutor last month also filed a second-degree murder accusation against a 44-year-old man for supplying the deadly drug to a 24-year-old woman and a 48-year-old husband who gave it to his wife, resulting in her death. District Attorney Thien Ho has created a Fentanyl Response Team to pursue such murder cases. The first prosecutor to charge murder from fentanyl in 2022 and secured a conviction this past July. Two more such cases await trial in Auburn.

Speaking of crime in which a majority of Police Commission members try to prevent cops from consequent arrests of perpetrators (more next month), have you heard about the two former Lululemon employees who were fired by the apparel giant in Georgia last June for violating company policy by attempting to stop three masked criminals from robbery? Police subsequently charged them with felony robbery.

But only in California could a legislator (Assemblyman Reggie Jones-Sawyer of Los Angeles, a Democrat,) introduce a bill inquiring judges to consider race in sentencing a convicted criminal. Assembly Bill 852 deems race part of sentencing guidelines so as "to rectify racial bias." The Assembly passed the bill last May. It now awaits a hearing in the Senate Public Safety Committee and action by the whole state Senate by Sept. 14.

The "renaming" brigades are still on the warpath. Oops! Sorry! That word derogates Native Americans like the Onondaga Indians who owned a "reservation" in the county of my Syracuse, N.Y. hometown. Middlebury College in central Vermont renamed its chapel because John Mead, an alumnus, who worked his way through the college after joining the Union Army in 1860 and after the Civil War becoming a medical doctor, then Vermont's governor in 1901, and donated $75,000 to build the chapel, requesting it to be named Mead Memorial Chapel to honor his family. In 2021, however, the Vermont legislature passed a resolution apologizing to the victims of such state-sanctioned sterilization some 100 years before, which arose from a national legislative movement to stop the effect of crime and cure other people with disabilities considered unacceptable to society. Then-Gov. Mead supported such sterilization and prohibition of marriage licenses. Other Americans favored eugenics (improvement of the human race by controlling human mating) in order to ensure humans of desirable character. Later, Vermont enacted a law aimed at disabled, poor and indigenous residents which led to sterilization of approximately 250 Vermonters.

Guess what? Last May, Gov. Mead's estate sued Middlebury College for breach of contract in a 79-page complaint in Vermont Superior Court for removing Mead's name. Estate representatives blame Middlebury's adoption of "presentism" which means judging historical figures "by current standards." It's the "cancel culture." The case is still pending with a fall trial date.

It's another example of the observation: "History tells us about presidential candidates splitting nails; but modern politicians keep busy splitting hairs."

Quentin Kopp is a former San Francisco supervisor, state senator, SF Ethics Commission member, president of the California High Speed Rail Authority governing board and retired Superior Court judge.

New Bike-share Stations Installed Throughout Golden Gate Park

By Thomas K. Pendergast

A dozen new bike-share stations were rolled out throughout Golden Gate Park last month to fill gaps in the overall network of Lyft's Bay Wheels, according to city officials at the opening ribbon-cutting ceremony on Aug. 7.

The original pilot program for the bike-share program started in 2013. It was expanded in 2017 and eventually included at least 320 stations and 4,500 bicycles. It has since been rebranded as Bay Wheels, according to the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA).

"These bike stations are going to help fill a critical gap in the Bay Wheels network, allowing people to use bikes every day to commute, to go visit friends and family and to move around the City far easier than can be moved in a car," SF Recreation and Park Department General Manager Phil Ginsburg said at the ceremony.

The newest version of Bike Share will be integrated with the Clipper Card system and feature a Bike Share for All program, in an effort to ensure everyone has access to the network.

"I'm thrilled to welcome the new Bay Wheels stations to Golden Gate Park which will expand ways for people to enjoy one of San Francisco's most beautiful spaces," said SF Mayor London Breed in a press release. "I want to thank Lyft for their partnership to invest in San Francisco to help create a safer, more sustainable and welcoming city to get around."

According to the mayor's office, the addition of the Golden Gate Park bike share stations builds on Bay Wheels' latest expansion to the Sunset neighborhood south of the park, which was announced in May. The five classic bike share stations and seven virtual stations now stretch from east of the Conservatory of Flowers to the westernmost edge of the park near Ocean Beach.

Virtual or "stationless" bike sharing does not rely on fixed docking stations. Stationless bikes would be parked at a bike rack or in the "furniture zone" of the sidewalk, which is the section of the sidewalk between the curb and pedestrian through zone where bike racks and other typical amenities – such as lighting, benches and utility poles – are usually located.

The "classic" stations will be installed on Pompei Circle (at the Dahlia Garden east of the Conservatory of Flowers); Martin Luther King Drive at Seventh Avenue; JFK Drive at Eighth Avenue and Music Concourse Drive; JFK Drive at Ocean Beach and at Spreckels Lake.

The "virtual" stations will be located on JFK Drive at Lloyd Lake; JFK Drive at Chain of Lakes Drive; MLK Drive at Chain of Lakes Drive; Bowling Green Drive north of the parking lot; Stow Lake; JFK Drive at Lindley Meadow near 30th Avenue and JFK Drive at the Service Road between Speedway Meadow/Hellman Hollow and Marx Meadow.

"As a District 4 supervisor, I'm excited because I want all the people visiting Golden Gate Park and getting on these bikes to come and explore the Sunset District, which is just adjacent to the park, and to discover all of our amazing restaurants and interesting places in the Sunset," said District 4 Supervisor Joel Engardio.

"As a city supervisor, I have to work on a lot of daunting issues in San Francisco, so it's great to be here to celebrate some joy," he said. "Because, San Francisco, we have a lot to work on, but we have a lot of joy in this city and we're going to create more of it. And this is the start of creating our best San Francisco."

The Bike Share for All campaign launched in early 2016 and features: A one-time $5 annual membership, then $5 per month in the second year with a small additional cost for e-bikes; bikes that are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year in San Francisco; rides extended from 30-minute maximums to 60 minutes; in-person enrollment at select locations and no credit or debit card requirements.

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On Aug. 7 in Golden Gate Park, officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to launch a new bike-share program, including (L-R) SFMTA Director of Streets Division Tom Maguire, Recreation and Park Department General Manager Phil Ginsburg, District 4 Supervisor Joel Engardio, Lyft General Manager Kanika Agrawal and San Francisco Bicycle Coalition Director of Advocacy Claire Amable. *Photo by Thomas K. Pendergast.*

"Our organization believes bike-share is a key component to our transportation system," the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition director of advocacy Claire Amable said at the Golden Gate Park station opening. "It offers the convenience of biking without the hassle of worrying about locking and storage. It opens the door to a new audience of people who either didn't have access to bikes in the past, don't have space for bikes in their homes currently or don't consider biking as a convenient option.

"More people on bikes means fewer cars on the road, more space on Muni and a greener San Francisco," she said. "It makes so much sense for bike-share stations to be here on JFK Promenade and in Golden Gate Park. Now no one needs to get hit with that $25 penalty fee and they get to end their ride at one of the most beautiful parks in our City,"

In 2022, according to the mayor's office, there were 237,000 unique riders across the five cities in which Bay Wheels operates; San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland, Emeryville and San Jose. In San Francisco alone, there were 2.4 million rides.

"Every additional ride that people make on a bike in San Francisco reduces air pollution, reduces traffic congestion and gives cyclists an opportunity to get some of that joy that Supervisor Engardio was talking about," said SFMTA Director of Streets Division Tom Maguire. "We want to see more of that kind of sustainable joyful transportation and we're grateful for the partnership of Rec. and Park, the supervisor and Lyft for bringing that to reality."

RR Turns 35

Continued from page 1

"Michael is a great editor. We're lucky to have him covering all of the important news in the neighborhood."

While merchants have always supported the papers, the pandemic of the last three years has hurt the local business community. To offset the loss of advertising revenue, the paper launched a Patreon campaign. Patreon is similar to GoFundMe, except sponsors donate a little each month rather than one lump sum. The goal is to sustain the papers' service to the community with the support of readers and donors.

The change in ownership led to some other changes for the paper as well. With the help of Durand, Kozakiewicz launched the Richmond Review website – RichmondSunsetNews.com – in 2019. This helped the paper keep up with the digitalization of modern newspapers. It has also led to a substantial growth in online readership. The website alone averages more than 20,000 views a month, up from 4,000 a month in 2019.

"We knew that it was the future, so I worked with Michael to get the website up and running," Kozakiewicz said.

Durand said he has benefitted greatly by having Kozakiewicz and an advisor and editor.

"Paul and I edit the final copy the days the papers go to the printer," Durand said. "His institutional knowledge is very deep and his eye for even the most minor mistakes has sharpened over the last 35 years."

Durand said that he is very inspired by the feedback of readers.

"We recently asked our readers for some financial support, and the response was heartwarming," he said. "The notes from readers telling us how much they love the papers is incredibly motivating. It's very hard work keeping the papers going, but the gratitude and the love we get back from our community makes all the effort worthwhile."

Durand is also enthusiastic about the Patreon campaign.

"With the help of our community, we hope to sustain the papers well into the future," he said.

Durand recently launched the Patreon Businesses campaign, which offers affordable rates and an opportunity to have businesses listed in every issue of the papers to let the community know they are helping keep the beloved newspapers alive. Information about tiered sponsorship opportunities is detailed on the website.

Durand said he sees his job as helping San Francisco's west side in many ways.

"We aim to inform our readers about what's happening in the neighborhood; to bring them feature stories about our exemplary neighbors; giving local residents a platform to share their ideas and opinions; and to help small businesses with affordable advertising opportunities," Durand said.

Kozakiewicz echoed the mission.

"Serving the community, that's what it's all about," he said.

To read previously published stories, find web-only content or learn more about the Richmond Review's Patreon account, go to RichmondSunsetNews.com.

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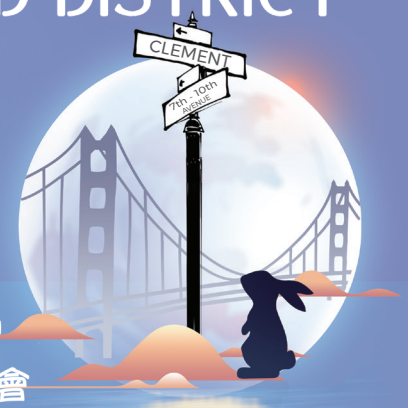

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRIDGE LESSONS

All levels of bridge players are welcome. Beginners: Fridays, Sept. 15 through Nov. 17. Intermediate: Wednesdays, Sept. 13 through Nov. 15. Each series costs $100; the first lesson is free. Each lesson runs from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Lessons held in a facility on Brotherhood Way. For experienced players, open game Wednesdays starts at noon. For more info., email Tom at tjsbridge@gmail.com.

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK PROJECT

The Children's Book Project is a San Francisco-based nonprofit that provides free books for children and youth living in economically vulnerable communities to help improve literacy and close the achievement gap. You can help create equitable access to books by donating new or gently used books that your children have outgrown. If you have good condition books to donate, our Book Bank is open by appointment at 2166 Palou St., or find a local book drop at childrensbookproject.org.

COMMENTARIES AND LETTERS

From the editor: All commentaries we publish are the opinions of the writers and should not be considered our editorial stances on issues. We strive to remain neutral and offer a balance of viewpoints. We invite readers who wish to express their opinions to send a letter to the editor to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Word limit for the newspaper is 350, for the website, 500. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

CONCERT OF HOPE

Free concert to raise awareness for myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome. West Portal Lutheran Church, 200 Sloat Blvd., Sunday, Sept. 24, 3 p.m., Free admission, reception to follow. For more information, email amykaomusic@gmail.com.

CONGRATULATIONS PELONEROS

Congratulations to the Peloneros for tying the knot and remaining humble! Wishing you two a lifetime of love and stiff martinis. Love Ryan, Aviva and Mona.

DRAMA WITH FRIENDS

Drama With Friends is a free ZOOM THEATRE. Want to act? Join a troupe of older actors looking to expand our acting pool. We present short plays by local playwrights every third Monday night of the month followed by a Q&A with the playwright. Prospective actors need to set aside time for two or three one-hour rehearsals a month. Want to join the audience? You're welcome too. Check out the Community Living Campaign for further information (sfcommunityliving.org/event/dwf) or write judygoddess@gmail.com.

FLOWER PIANO

Flower Piano will again transform the San Francisco Botanical Garden in Golden gate Park into the City's own alfresco concert hall in September where everyone is invited to play and listen. Participants are invited to explore the Botanical Garden's global living plant collections as they seek out the 12 pianos spread out across the 55-acre living museum. At each of the pianos, there will be scheduled professional and community partner performances as well as ample open play time for anyone to sit down and play – reflecting a range of genres, ages and cultures. Spontaneous community music-making around the pianos during unscheduled times are often cited as favorite moments among Flower Piano attendees. Complete program and ticket links can be found at sfbg.org/flowerpiano.

FREE ADAPTIVE BIKE PROGRAM

Serving people with disabilities in SF parks, the free Adaptive Bike Program is presented by a partnership between SF Rec. and Park, Bay Area Outreach and Recreation Program (BORP) and SF Municipal Transportation Agency. Ride an adaptive bike in two lovely locations either in Golden Gate Park (every first and third Saturday) or on The Great Highway (every second and fourth Saturday). Reservations are required (limited availability on some bikes). To reserve a bike, contact BORP Cycling Center at 510-848-2930 or e-mail at cycling@borp.org by 5 p.m. on the Thursday before the event.

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CHILDREN/FAMILY PROGRAMS:

"Storytime." Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11-11:30 a.m.

"Activity: Lego Free Play." Build skyscrapers, forts, castles or whatever your imagination desires with LEGO. For ages 5 and older. Sept. 13, 3-4 p.m.

TEEN PROGRAM:

"Activity: Plant Identification." Make your own field guide. Bring your cell phone and learn how to identify plants and animals using a field identification app. Discover all the flora and fauna right outside of the Richmond branch library. For ages 13–18. Thursday, Sept. 14, 4-5 p.m.

ADULT PROGRAMS:

"Breath meditation with Don Narin." Guided meditation for calming and stress release. Every Thursday, 11-11:30 a.m.

"Gentle Yoga with Don Narin." Yoga anyone can do. Bring your own mat or use a library chair. Every Thursday, 11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

"Tutorial: Drop-In Tech Support for Older Adults with the Felton Institute Tech Squad." Get one-on-one help with your phone or tablet, searching the Internet, setting up an email account and other basic computer tasks. Cantonese-speaking Tech Squad members are available to assist.

"Author: Gao Lu Yi." Talk in Chinese. Sunday, Sept. 3, 2-4 p.m.

"Read Together, Silent Book Club." Bring any book (fiction or nonfiction) for a period of silent reading followed by a discussion when you share what you are reading with others. The club meets every other Wednesday, Sept. 6 and 20, 3-5 p.m.

"Performance: Classical Tea Ceremony with Traditional Garments." Experience a Chinese tea ceremony, traditional dances and traditional Chinese costumes in a performance by the Dasen American Academy. This program is a partnership with the Dasen American Academy. Space is limited. Reservations required: 415-355-5600. Saturday, Sept. 16, 2-3 p.m.

"Workshop: Westside Affordable Housing Richmond and Sunset." This workshop offers affordable housing resources and educational information in Sunset and Richmond districts. You will learn how to apply for affordable housing, who qualify for affordable housing, how many units will be built in the community and why it matters to Richmond and Sunset residents. In English and Cantonese. English session 1-2:30 p.m. Cantonese session 3-4:30 p.m. For reservations, call 415-355-5600. Saturday, Sept. 23, 1-4:30 p.m.

"Gardening: All About Herbs and Edible Flowers." Discover or renew a passion for growing herbs. Learn the basics of growing, harvesting and using culinary herbs and edible flowers from two local master gardeners. Propagate your plants from seeds, cuttings, transplants and divisions. Maintain your plants with sustainable methods and harvest your herbs to use them fresh or preserve them for future use. Presented by UCCE Master Gardeners Kathy Fleming and Cindi Morris. Saturday, Sept. 30, 1-2:30 p.m.

PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGES:

"Workshop: Chinese Calligraphy." Learn the art of Chinese calligraphy in celebration of the Autumn Moon Festival. Whether you're a beginner or have experience, you will learn how to hold the brush, master basic strokes, and create calligraphic artwork. Space is limited. Reservations required: 415-355-5638. Saturday, Sept. 2, 4-5:30 p.m.

"Refuse Refuse : Neighborhood cleanup and storytime." Led by community member Vince Yuen, meet at the 10th Avenue door of the Richmond Library to help with neighborhood clean up. Monthly. Sept. 9, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy September birthday to Mariamane Akopyan, Peg Anderson, Julien Calfayan, Cody Davis, Mimi and Zozo D., Wendy Durand, Gary E., Harry Fong, Kelvin Gee, Taylor Gee, Carolyn Glaser, David Heller, Lawrence Helman, Steven Hom, Paula Karolak, Sue Kolb, Hailey Jade Kozakiewicz, Lillian Lippold, Nicole Meldahl, Thea Mazzalai Nguyen, Danny Saiz, triplets Caroline, Daniel and Max Salvatore, Edith Salvatore, Hannah Schmidt, Rick Sill, Joey Villanueva, Pandora Wong and Cliff Yee. *To add a name to the monthly birthday list, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Free.*

MEET THE EDITOR OF THE RICHMOND REVIEW

Meet the editor of the Richmond Review: You are invited to meet with Michael Durand, editor and publisher of the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers and the RichmondSunsetNews.com website. Bring your story ideas, feedback, suggestions, questions, announcement items and advertising inquiries. We are also welcoming new writers and photographers interested in contributing stories and photos. Normally, the Meet the Editor session is at the One Richmond storefront, 802 Clement St., every second Wednesday of the month, 1-2:30 p.m. **This month, meet Michael Durand at the Richmond District Autumn Moon Festival on Sept. 9. See ad on page 9 for details.** For more information, call 415-706-6428 or email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Scheduled appointments not necessary but appreciated.

ONLINE-ONLY CONTENT

Visit our website, to find features that you can't find in the newspaper. We recently uploaded three albums of Outside Lands 2023 photos. Look for "Cooking Together," by Shanta Nimbark Sacharoff, "Overtures and Undertows," a column by Noma Faingold, a talented writer and longtime contributor to the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers. Business features include, "Business Profile" by John Oppenheimer and "A Shot of Salvation" by Deno Gellepes. Check out the recent "Photos of the Month" gallery. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

PENNY PITCH FUNDRAISER

Prior to the pandemic, NOISE hosted a fundraiser for KFJC, a great non-profit radio station. NOISE will be hosting a Penny Pitch fundraiser for the station. KFJC will be broadcasting LIVE from NOISE 1-6 p.m. – a different DJ each hour! 1 p.m. Good Karma, 2 p.m. Spliff Skankn', 3 p.m. Cadillac Margarita, 4 p.m. Maybelline, 5 p.m. Captain Jack. They will have snacks, drinks and merch (they have the coolest T-shirts!). They collect pocket change to help fund the radio station. Saturday, Sept. 9, 1-6 p.m. NOISE, 3427 Balboa St. For more information, call 415-702-6006. Instagram: @kfjc897fm, NOISE @noisesanfrancisco.

'PHOTOS OF THE MONTH' GALLERY ONLINE

Photographers are invited to submit three of their best photos for consideration to be published in the "Photos of the Month" gallery on RichmondSunsetNews.com. The website averages 20,000 views per month. Please submit photos as jpegs, 150 dpi, six inches wide. If you don't know how to size your photos, we can help. Please submit on the 15th of each month. For more information, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com or call 415-706-6428.

REFUSE REFUSE CLEANUPS

Friday, Sept. 1, 8–9 a.m., Morning Coffee Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/513212/.

Friday, Sept. 1, 3:30–5 p.m., Clement Street Happy Hour Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/437706/.

Saturday, Sept. 2, 10–11:30 a.m., KEEP Ocean Beach Clean, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/399341/.

Thursday, Sept. 7, 10:30 a.m.–noon, SF Village Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/413075/.

Thursday, Sept. 7, 3:30–4:30 p.m., One Richmond Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/528372/.

Saturday, Sept. 9, 10–11:30 a.m., KEEP Ocean Beach Clean, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/399341/.

Tuesday, Sept. 12, 3:30–4:30 p.m., Richmond Library Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/553131/.

Friday, Sept. 15, 4–5:30 p.m., Outer Richmond Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/450069/.

Saturday, Sept. 16, 9–11 a.m., Lone Mountain Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/563439/

Saturday, Sept. 16, 10–11:30 a.m. – KEEP Ocean Beach Clean – mobilize.us/togethersf/event/399341/.

Sunday, Sept. 17, 11 a.m.–1 p.m., Baker Beach Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/560617/.

Saturday, Sept. 23, 10–11:30 a.m., KEEP Ocean Beach Clean, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/399341/.

Saturday, Sept. 30, 10 a.m.–noon, Richmond District Cleanup, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/441884/.

Saturday, Sept. 30, 10–11:30 a.m., KEEP Ocean Beach Clean, mobilize.us/togethersf/event/399341/.

REMEDY FEELIN'

We are Remedy Feelin'. We are a Richmond District, rock 'n' roll group playing original tunes. This group is new, but we have all been in dozens of bands over the past 20+ years. It ain't our first rodeo. We are all around 40, playing original rock 'n' roll, most influenced by Rolling Stones, Ramones, David Bowie and the blues. Something that is everywhere on the radio but missing from the streets and the bars in 2023. We are all prideful SF residents who embody the true spirit of San Francisco and rock 'n' roll. We are working class, union members, mixed-race families, who stand up for the underdog. Our blood, sweat and tears are on these streets – and our stickers are in these dive bars. Learn more: music – remedyfeelin.bandcamp.com/album/demo-2022, website – remedyfeelin.blogspot.com/, IG – instagram.com/remedyfeelin/, review – maximumrocknroll.com/band/remedy-feelin/. Our next free show: Sept. 30, 8 p.m., Winter's Tavern (21+), 1522 Francisco Blvd., Pacifica.

Continued on page 11

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Continued from page 10

RICHMOND DISTRICT AUTUMN MOON FESTIVAL

Join your neighbors and friends at the seventh annual Autumn Moon Festival and enjoy live performances, API market stalls, traditional arts and crafts and even a bunny contest! Clement Street, between Seventh and 10th avenues, Saturday, Sept. 9, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Learn more at onerichmondsf.com/richmond-district-autumn-moon-festival.

SENIOR NEEDS A HOME

Senior lady, quiet, with references, needs a place to live at a private residence in the west area of San Francisco. Having arthritis, she avoids flights of steps and hills. Uses public transportation. Call 415-561-9275 if you or someone you know can provide her a home.

STAMP COLLECTOR AND STAMP COLLECTIONS

Stamp collector is buying stamps and stamp collections. I am buying "older stamps" from the 1800s to 1930. American Philatelic Society member since 1986. Pictures are appreciated. Call or text message 415-533-0761.

WORLD ARTS DANCE FESTIVAL

World Arts West Dance Festival returns to the Presidio as part of the Presidio Sunday Afternoons series hosted by Partnership for the Presidio. This year's remarkable lineup of artists will present dances from Mexico, India, Nicaragua, Brazil, West African, Spain and Tahiti, to name a few. Enjoy interactive demos with festival artists. Grab a bite at one of the Presidio pop-up multicultural food trucks. Take the free Presidio GO shuttle and come revel in the power of dance with us! Presidio Tunnel Tops, Sunday, Sept. 10, 1-4 p.m. For more information, go to eventbrite.com/e/world-arts-west-dance-festival-2023-tickets-679757642407.

WRITING AND EDITING SERVICE

I am a California licensed attorney who is able to help with many of your writing, editing, and proofreading needs. I can assist with reports, proposals, professional applications, books, resumes and cover letters. I have 25 years of government experience and a 12-year human resources and recruiting background. Recently, I edited a manuscript for one author and provide ongoing editorial support to another. I welcome large and small projects. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, concerns or feedback. Email: writerseditors17@gmail.com or call/text 415-407-7328. I look forward to working with you.

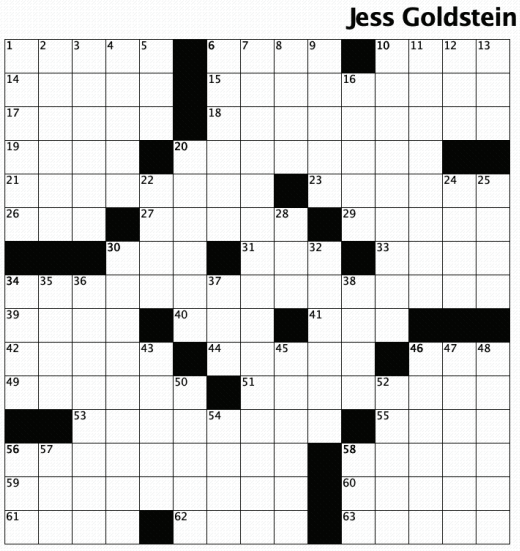
Announcements: $1 per word, 20 word minimum. Share birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, births, obituaries, graduations, sports highlights, business accomplishments, retirements, college admissions, etc.

FREE: Add a name to the monthly birthday list or a community event announcements free of charge.

We support small businesses: Free announcements for small businesses celebrating an anniversary or other significant milestone or event. Send announcement to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Announcements will run in the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers (36,200 copies) and on RichmondSunsetNews.com (20,000+ views per month). Ads must be pre-paid. Deadline: 20th of the month. Mail check to: P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116. Call 415-706-6428 or email editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com for more details.

Themeless Puzzle — Jess Goldstein



ACROSS

1. Give up
6. At the summit
10. Skiers' overalls
14. Essential acid
15. Nickname for an expensive outdoor clothing retailer
17. Sheep in 1990s news
18. Intimacy
19. Warm glow
20. Glows that may be sprayed on
21. Rochester's region
23. "Next Lifetime" singer Badu
26. Many a frat house
27. Fact-finding job
29. Black Panther Bobby
30. Fish without scales
31. Overwhelming amount
33. Encouraging word
34. Smartphone notification bookended with alert symbols
39. Not bright
40. Misstep
41. French menu word
42. Beep or buzz
44. Tow truck in "Cars"
46. Brand that sells Tasman and Tazz slippers
49. "Look here..."
51. Rebellious-sounding skateboard trick
53. Playing with
55. "Didn't you forget something?"
56. Fuses
58. Like airplane headphones
59. Bit
60. Jean or Rae
61. "Mean Girls" protagonist
62. Cheek or lip
63. Highest point

DOWN

1. Impressive person
2. Become (to)
3. California city known as the "Garlic Capital of the World"
4. Addition to the family, or to the family home
5. Small dog
6. Integral H.S. class
7. Big "don't" to an elementary schooler
8. Oklahoma tribe
9. Adhesive
10. Sly peace sign in a group photo
11. Perform loops and flips
12. 54-down ranking system
13. Family moniker
16. They're shifted
20. "Ya dig?"
22. Matzo ___
24. Ski resort that bans snowboarders
25. Close, as a wound
28. Liberal leader?
30. In perpetuum
32. Showing hopelessness
34. Hazy brews
35. Fisherman's relation?
36. Melatonin or Nighty Night Tea
37. Disaster-ready grp.
38. Capital of Italy
43. Beach item
45. Salutes
46. "Look higher!"
47. Twinkles
48. Regular at the fitness center
50. Traces of smoke
52. Regal home
54. "Elite Eight" org.
56. Public health agcy.
57. 3600 secondi
58. Monsters ___

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RichmondSunsetNews.com

Patisserie on California is a Sweet and Delicious Passion Project

By Noma Faingold

It's about 10:30 a.m. on a recent Sunday and pastry chef Philippe Delarue is putting the finishing touches on a tray of Napoleons in his kitchen. They don't resemble typical Napoleons. Like any artist, he puts his own spin on the flaky, puff pastry confection by displaying them on their sides, before methodically topping them with tall, sculpted swirls of whipped cream.

His weekend-only bakery business, Patisserie on California, which launched at the height of the pandemic in May 2020, has virtually taken over his Outer Richmond three-bedroom flat. The dining room is a staging area with an aluminum sheet pan rack filled with shelves of glossy pear and apricot tarts. On the dining table, a stack of French cookbooks shares the surface with decadent desserts, such as key lime and chocolate/caramel tartlets, ganache-covered Pain de Gênes, ganache-laced brownies, colorful mini macarons and chocolate éclairs.

Delarue, born in Le Mans, France, has been up since 1 a.m. preparing the most perishable of the 30-plus choices he offers every weekend in front of his garage, under a light blue awning. A line is already forming, as the small staff walks down the stairs and carefully displays the desserts on cloth-covered tables. This weekend's specials are pavlova with mixed fresh fruits and a savory to-go lunch of ratatouille paired with the smoothest polenta triangles you may ever taste.

On Saturday and Sunday, the bakery is open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and the French fare sells out nearly every weekend. Delarue estimates 80% of sales comes from repeat customers. "People come every week, sometimes both days," he said. "We know their names. We talk. We know what they like. Some always get the same things."

A line of customers eye tempting treats as they wait their turn to purchase Philippe Delarue's culinary works of art. *Photo by Noma Faingold.*

Delarue, after helming a bakery, Patisserie Philippe, in the design district on Townsend Street for five years and then a wholesale bakery business for another five years, decided he no longer wanted partners. If he was going to work 60 to 80 hours each week (and almost never taking a vacation), he wanted to work for himself. And why not run it out of his apartment, where he has lived for 15 years?

"This apartment is becoming a bakery," he said. "I have the best landlord. How many landlords would let their tenant open a business in front of the building?"

The community has embraced Patisserie on California, located one block from the exquisitely tiled Lincoln Park Steps.

"I wanted to be part of the community and help the community because it was at the time of the pandemic," Delarue said. "This is a really nice neighborhood, where people like to socialize. At the time, everybody was afraid to get together. Selling outside made it easier."

It took about a year to gain a following, according to Nipuna Rajapaksh, who has worked with Delarue for two years, handling non-kitchen duties, including shopping runs, selling, administrative (securing permits and accounting) and social media (Instagram: @patisserieoncalifornia). A turning point occurred after a March 2022 TikTok video by creator @taybeepboop went viral. Suddenly, there were consistently 30 to 40 people lining up ahead of the 11 a.m. opening hour.

"Of course, we didn't have enough food for everybody when that happened," Delarue said.

Also drawing customers are the reasonable prices (a benefit of low-cost overhead) and the friendly staff, in addition to the variety and quality of the sumptuous pastries and desserts. Favorites include rich pastries like Napoleons and chocolate éclairs, as well as such breakfast staples as blueberry muffins, brioche loaves and a light, savory cheesy roll, known as gougéres (which has a similar texture to a popover).

Another charming touch is the way made-to-order packaged lunches are lowered from a first-floor window in a wicker basket to the kiosk.

It's not just people in the neighborhood who frequent Patisserie on California. There were customers from Pacifica, Seattle and Los Angeles on this particular Sunday. Lauren Woore, a pastry chef at Open Market in L.A., was excited to try a few items. She had heard about it from a San Francisco friend.

"I love that (Delarue) has the comfort of baking from his home and has the creative freedom," Woore said. When making her selections, she grinned when announcing, "This is research."

Devoted local customer, Blaire Einfalt, brought her Seattle-based father, Michael Einfalt, during one of his regular visits. They spent about $100 for a wide array of treats for the whole family.

"My job when I moved to San Francisco was to find the best bakeries. This is definitely the best. You can tell it's a passion project," said the UCSF student. "I could come every weekend and still not try everything."

Delarue didn't go to traditional cooking school. Instead, he apprenticed at a patisserie in his home town, followed by nearly three years working in Paris at the celebrated culinary empire founded by pastry chef Gaston Lenôtre.

"That was the best way to train. I don't believe in school," he said. "In school you've got the oven and the fridge. Everything is working. In real life, it's different."

After stints in London and Montreal, Delarue came to the United States and eventually made his way to San Francisco in 2001. He has since become a U.S. citizen.

He said he is making a decent living with Patisserie on California but admits it's hard work.

"I don't do it for the money. I do it because I love it. I don't really have time for anything else. It takes my whole life," said Delarue. "This is not like selling girl scout cookies."

He's had offers to open another traditional storefront bakery, but he always declines.

"This is it. This is my last chance," Delarue said. "I don't want a partner. I don't want another bakery."

He does, however, have a retirement plan. It's about two years away and involves a return to France.

"I like working hard but I'm not 20 anymore," he said. "I'm going to buy a house in Brittany … on the beach."

Patisserie on California, 6833 California St. Hours: Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Advanced orders are taken by direct message through Instagram account @patisserieoncalifornia.

Regular customer Blaire Einfalt, who lives in the Outer Sunset, with her father, Michael Einfalt, who was visiting from Seattle. Her favorites are the key lime tartlet and blueberry muffin. She said Patisserie on California is the best bakery in San Francisco. Above: Chocolate/caramel tartlets.

Assemblymember Phil Ting
invites you to join your friends and neighbors for a casual conversation over coffee. Come share your thoughts on community and legislative matters important to you.

BREAKFAST & CONVERSATION

Breakfast provided at no taxpayer expense

SATURDAY
September 30
10 - 11:30 a.m.

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
Golden Gate Park
55 Music Concourse Drive,
San Francisco, CA 94118

Accessible by N Judah and Muni Bus Routes 5, 7, 28, 43.

TO RSVP VISIT: ASMDC.ORG/CJCC23
For more information, please call the District Office at (415) 557-2312.
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Commentary

Brian Quan

Envisioning a Better Neighborhood

Ever since the sighting of San Francisco Bay by Portolá in 1769, the desire to come to the region has only grown.

One of the fascinating infographics I've noticed popping up around the Lands End trail has been tidbits about the various shipwrecks that dot the entrance to the safe and calm waters of the Bay. It's easy to forget that the fog and strong currents just west of the Golden Gate Bridge created a mortal danger that, until fairly recently, posed one of the greatest challenges to our then-growing region.

Surprisingly, the first shipwreck in the area was in 1595 from a Spanish galleon, the San Agustin, that just missed making it to the San Francisco Bay and sank off the coast of Point Reyes. The 1888 collision between the SS Oceanic and the SS City of Chester nearly worsened U.S.-China relations at the turn of the century, but potentially turned the course of history with the bravery of the Chinese crew and passengers coming to the rescue of the fast-sinking City of Chester.

The most impactful shipwreck in the area was likely the SS City of Rio de Janeiro in 1901 that hit Mile Rock amidst heavy fog and led to the building of the Mile Rock Lighthouse. Yet, even as late as 1952, the FV Fernstream fell victim to an accidental collision in heavy fog despite calm seas, fog signals and radar.

Could you imagine had we not installed the ever-present foghorns, modern lighthouses and worked to make the heavily trafficked route safer? Without investing and building up the area there might have been considerably more shipwrecks and the San Francisco Bay Area would not have been the major port during WWII that became the springboard to our continued prosperity. Growing infrastructure and making routes safer as the volume of traffic increased is how cities and regions change over time if they want to grow to accommodate the people that give character to the area.

Yet it seems we are getting in own way on change these days at City Hall. Recent housing projects that appear to have all their permits ready, like 469 Stevenson and 1151 Washington as well as long-standing proposals, like the Geary BRT or the Alexandria Theatre adaptive reuse, face further delays. The path forward on these projects has become as opaque as the August fog that settles over Outside Lands. The incessant need for public input at times feels like a riptide pulling us away from the shore. And a discretionary review process on even the smallest project are the rocky reefs hiding below the waterline ready to capsize the unwary.

With the state setting forth to address the challenges ahead regarding housing, transit and the environment, the City will need to adapt to its approved draft plan submitted to the state or face losing decision-making ability and funding on future projects. To not be sunken by a state takeover, the mayor's Housing for All strategy "consists of governmental organization actions, administrative actions and legislative actions the City will take to meet the bold goal set in the Housing Element of allowing for 82,000 new homes to be built over eight years."

Part of this the mayor can directly implement, like allowing our departments to work more efficiently, more cohesively and more collaboratively. The legislative side will need approval and support from the Board of Supervisors and the electorate to see even more of the streamlining take place.

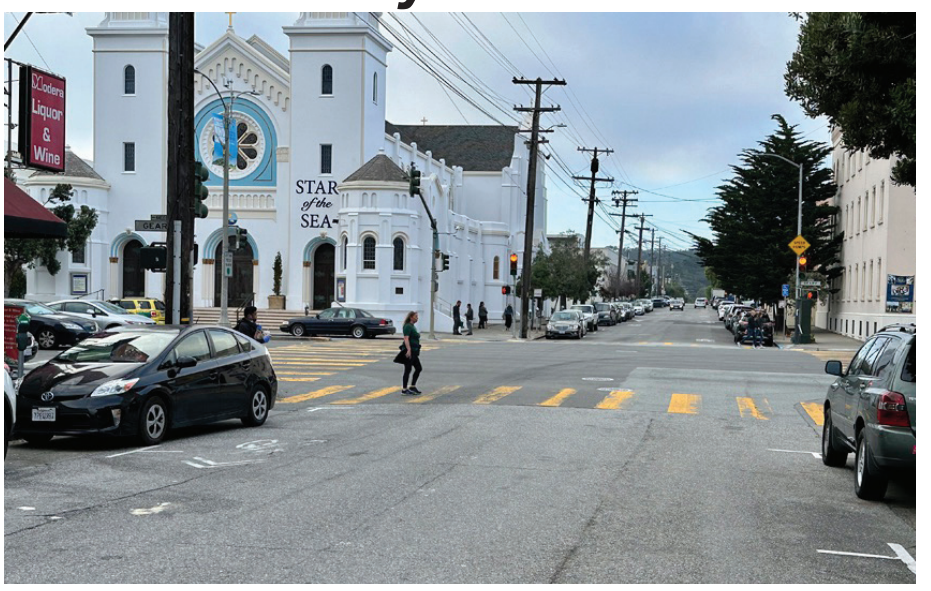
We built things to make it safer, reliable and improved. If we needed to do that now, what would we face? Complaints about the noise created by the foghorns. Upsetting the natural views with a giant International Orange-colored suspension bridge. This is an opportunity for innovation and growth. We shouldn't hold hostage any new changes to the need to prevent any possible harm. Community inputs and insights should be helping improve changes and understanding how to best mitigate the transition.

It is easy to lose sight of how much our environment is a thing we've built and invested in over many decades. These shipwrecks of the past should remind us that we can create genuine progress as long as we have leaders willing to advance change. That's where we can make sure our leaders in City Hall are ensuring that this change is one that is inclusive of housing for all income levels; one that helps us achieve our density goals and our climate goals; one that can help alleviate the homelessness problem; one that can attract and support a diverse population of teachers, first responders, artists and restaurant workers; one in which families can stay together and seniors can age in place and kids can afford to stay in the City and make a life for themselves where they grew up.

By committing our support for the upcoming Housing for All legislation, we can finally start to see a clearer path through the fog of permits that could sink our housing future with the state.

Brian Quan is a Richmond District native, co-leader of Grow the Richmond, president of the Chinese American Democratic Club, member of the Park Presidio-Sunset Lions Club and participant in monthly Refuse Refuse S.F. street clean-ups.

'Then and Now': Eighth Avenue Near Geary Boulevard



Left: The details of an accident between an auto and the 21-line streetcar (#410) on Eighth Avenue just south of Geary Boulevard on Feb. 24, 1948 are lost to history, unless one of our readers has a memory of this event. The Star of the Sea Church is in the background. *Photo courtesy of a private collector/Western Neighborhoods Project/OpenSFHistory.* Right: The Star of the Sea Church is still going strong 75 years later. The rails and streetcar lines are gone. Reliable Drugs on the southwest corner is now Modera Liquor & Wine. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

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Geary merchants have all your back-to-school needs covered.
DAVID HELLER PRESIDENT
Geary Blvd. is OPEN for business!
Visit Geary merchants in person or online:
www.gearyblvd.org
GEARY BOULEVARD MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

If you contributed to either our "Nourish Your Neighborhood Newspaper" campaign or signed up on our Patreon account, we have special Richmond Review branded gifts for you to thank you for your support! We would also like to list your name in the paper to thank you (or you can be the "Anonymous" we list each month). Email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com or call 415-706-6428 and we'll make it happen. *Find Patreon information at RichmondSunsetNews.com. All of us at the Richmond Review are sincerely grateful for your generous contributions. Thank you.*

Geary Quick-Build Protest

Continued from page 1

even instituted the express buses back," Fewer said. "Most of these businesses along Geary have not picked up to pre-pandemic levels, so the elimination of these parking spaces at this time will be detrimental to them.

"But more than that, the SFPUC is embarking on a complete sewer replacement project along Geary on the same area in a year, and so the merchants are saying 'Can't you wait until after they do this sewer project to do this?' because they'll be hit twice."

Fewer noted the impact of other similar projects in the City.

"We've seen what happens with construction along any major corridor," she said. "We look at Taraval Street and the small businesses that have been impacted there. We look at Van Ness. We look at the central subway; what's happened to the Chinatown small businesses.

"Any time there's construction, small businesses take a hit."

Sean Kim, the owner of Joe's Ice Cream, also brought up the timing.

"I cannot say I can survive because during the pandemic we lost all of my reserves. I used all my checking account money but the government helped, so we just survived," Kim said. "But we don't have any extra money to survive. The SFMTA is trying to do a quick build but, for us, it's a quick destruction."

Kim mentioned that construction on the sewer replacement will go to 2027 and then the SFMTA comes back in 2027 to do its main project called the Geary Improvement Project, which will involve heavy construction, not just painting and striping and moving bus stops like the quick-build project.

"Which means, for us, from now on until 2027-2028, is four to five years. We cannot survive those constructions," Kim said.

Kim said they've been asking the SFMTA to postpone the quick-build project until after sewer work. If they do it now, he sees it as just a waste of money.

"They keep telling us there's state funding; if they don't do it this year, they will lose that money," he said. "But it's taxpayer's money. Why do we have to waste that money?"

District 11 Supervisor Ahsha Safai also voiced his concern.

District 11 Supervisor Ahsha Safai came to support Geary Boulevard merchants and concerned neighbors at a mock funeral for those who have gone out of business along that commercial corridor, and to oppose the SFMTA's quick-build program. *Photo by Thomas K. Pendergast.*

"In my district a number of years ago, very similar to this, the SFMTA decided they were going to destroy our small village on Mission Street," Safai said. "There was angled parking. There was support for businesses. And there was the ability to do rapid transit without destroying the fabric of small businesses but they didn't listen.

"And now they've had to come back and do all types of traffic calming, traffic lights, because all they've experienced is pedestrian fatalities, pedestrian accidents and essentially undermining the infrastructure.

Safai said he sees the parallel on the west side.

"The same thing is happening now on Taraval," he said. "I was with a business owner on Taraval just last week who lost $1.5 million in revenue while that construction project has been going on. There is no consideration for businesses."

At the SFMTA Board of Directors meeting the next day, project manager Liz Brisson explained that after the angled parking is converted to parallel parking, three lanes in each direction would be created; two for general traffic and one designated as a transit-only lane.

They estimate that someone traveling round-trip through the project area from Palm Avenue to 31st Avenue would save about 5.5 minutes per day, which adds up to 22.7 hours for someone traveling daily over the course of a year.

They also figure that about 5,600 metric tons of carbon dioxide would be removed each year from the air due to about 7,000 car trips switching to transit, which equivalent to 10 square miles of forest planted.

She says the parking loss from 34th Avenue to Palm and Jordan avenues would have been a total of 70 fewer angled parking spaces on Geary Boulevard. But with the addition of 39 parking spaces added on adjacent cross streets, the net angled parking loss would be reduced to 31 spots.

"We do understand that the 25th Avenue to Park Presidio Boulevard segment is where the heart of the Geary commercial core is and where there is some concentration of the parking loss and where parking is most important," Brisson said. "In that segment of the corridor, the net parking loss per block is 1.5 spaces."

Fewer, however, questioned this particular figure.

"We're talking about a stretch between 15th and 25th specifically and we are looking at those lost parking spaces," she said. "Yes, you can add spaces at 31st Avenue and you can add spaces at 14th Avenue or on the side streets. But we're talking around this corridor between 15th Avenue and 25th Avenue being really the heart and soul of the Geary merchant corridor. And we need the spaces here for that."

According to SFMTA figures, out of the total 31 angled parking spaces that will be removed, 16 of them are between Park Presidio and 25th Avenue.

"It's been a contentious item and it's been like that for some time," SFMTA Director Stephanie Cajina said. "There's been a large amount of compromise throughout this journey, a lot of negotiations that community members have had. I think everyone has a huge stake in this project being successful and success is defined differently for all the stakeholders here and that's palpable today."

Director Manny Yekutiel said he understands the merchants' concerns because he runs a business.

"I know what it's like to have businesses closing all around you and wondering when yours will be next. Three major businesses closed a block away from my business in the last few months," Yekutiel said. "Today we are planning for the Geary of the future just as much, if not more, than addressing the Geary of today.

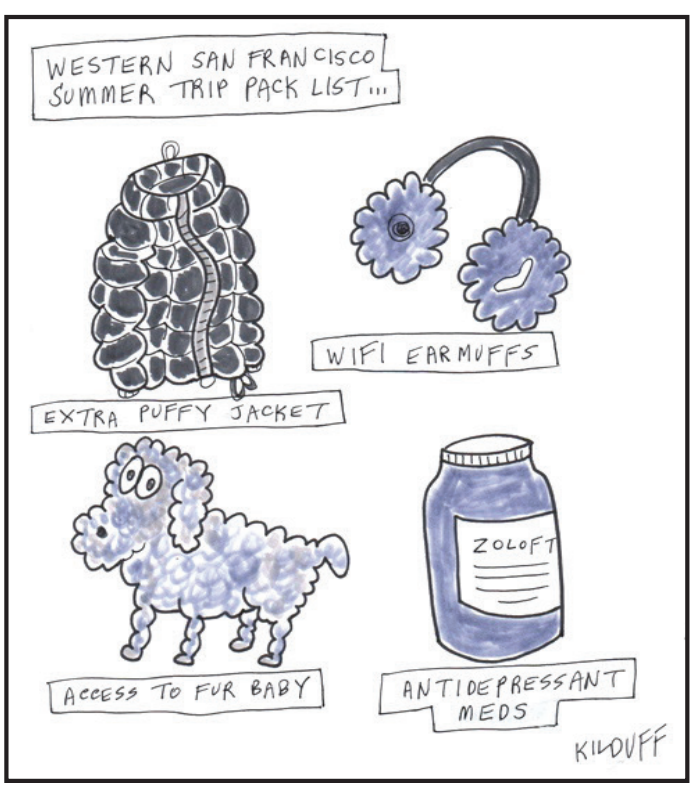
"After being briefed by staff, I feel confident that this agency, that's us up here, has bent over backwards and gone above and beyond to try to ameliorate the concerns from my people, the merchants, including moving multiple bike-share stations to add additional parking and keeping two lanes for car traffic."

Yekutiel said he was concerned about the tone of the conversations between the City and the merchants.

"I must express my thoughts on the level of rancor that has proceeded today's meeting; voices raised, horrific accusations, generally high levels of drama and leaders in our City on all sides of this debate acting in ways unbecoming of leadership," he said. "This discourse on this project is the perfect microcosm of what is hampering our fair city from being the best version of ourselves."

The Board then voted unanimously to begin the quick-build project this fall and not wait for the SFPUC construction to begin.

Kilduff's Korner By Paul Kilduff



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Supervisor Connie Chan

Hold School Leaders Accountable

In August, schools across the City welcomed students back. While public education builds our future generations, and we all want to be optimistic about their future, the reality is the ways that both the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and City College of San Francisco (CCSF) have been operating is greatly disappointing. These districts' administrations have not been doing right by our teachers, students and our families.

At SFUSD, when we ask why we are losing our teachers, the simple fact is that after nearly two years and $20 million, they have not been able to pay our teachers on time and correctly. The looming deficit has long been an issue, yet the administration and Board of Education just cannot seem to get a handle on it. The deficit is now forcing many families to face the possibilities of school closures, furthering the inequity in our public-school education system. Further, the lack of a concrete and immediate response to address student violence and sexual assault in our schools is unacceptable, and we cannot continue to ignore the mental health and academic gaps that our students and their families suffered through the pandemic.

When I first took office, I recognized my limited role as a member of the Board of Supervisors when it comes to fundamentally changing our school system. Nonetheless, I fought to make sure we had funding to provide free summer camp for our students and families to alleviate their burden of care during the pandemic. With the success of free summer, my colleagues on the Board and I built on the momentum and were able to push forward with the Student Success Fund, a ballot measure that voters approved to provide additional city grant funding for schools to offer teachers and students the opportunity to close the academic gap – without adding a deficit to our city budget.

The truth is, San Francisco voters have always been generous and supportive of our public schools. In 2004, voters approved the establishment of the Public Education Enrichment Fund (PEEF) which dedicates city funding to support enrichment programming throughout our school system. PEEF resources support SFUSD's sports, libraries, arts and music programs, in addition to nurses and social workers. Now we continue to invest to support closing the academic gap providing after school academic tutor programming with city funding from the Student Success Fund.

Yet the question is not just about whether or not there are enough resources, but also whether or not there is mismanagement of the resources given. This is the question that I will be focusing on this fall as the chair of the Budget Committee. I am calling for a public hearing to examine SFUSD's spending, treatment of our teachers, and education and services to our students and families.

We know that many of our high school students, as well as those who are essential workers or immigrant workers, in need of higher education, also suffered greatly during the pandemic. Only through City College of San Francisco's Free City will many have an affordable option to higher education or an opportunity to expand their role in the workforce.

Free City, another San Francisco voter approved program funded by the City, was created to provide access to free college courses for all San Francisco residents. Enrollment has continued to increase because of student demand and Free City grants, yet the City College's administration continues to lay off faculty and cut class offerings.

CCSF has overcome many challenges in the last decade, and thanks to the new state funding formula and continued increases in enrollment, CCSF is finally fiscally solvent. There is no more reason for layoffs or reduced class offerings when demand increases. In fact, this past June the Board of Supervisors expanded Free City funding in order to waive fees for students who had defaulted, so that they can return and register for new classes.

It is time to make sure City College meets the demands of enrollment, rehires laid off professors and serves all students equitably. This is why I am calling for a hearing on the spending and management of Free City by CCSF at the Budget Committee.

San Franciscans have done our part to fund these school administrations – it is time they do right by our students, teachers and families. I will hold them accountable, ask the tough questions to make sure they deliver the promises that we made, and San Francisco voters demanded. Our students and their families deserve quality public education, and they deserve the best that the San Francisco Unified School District and City College of San Francisco can offer.

Connie Chan represents District 1 on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. She can be reached at 415-554-7410 or chanstaff@sfgov.org. Find an archive of her columns online at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Commentary

Julie Pitta

Citizen Moritz

The billboard looms large over the mid-Richmond. For those who might have missed it, the brightly colored sign takes a swipe at the City's response to the fentanyl crisis. Its banner teases, "That's Fentalife!"

The billboard is part of a $300,000 advertising campaign funded by Michael Moritz, a technology venture capitalist who is only the latest in a long line of business leaders willing to spend lavishly to influence San Francisco politics. Moritz has poured millions into Together SF Action, a political action committee. Like William Randolph Hearst before him, Moritz has even started a news website, The San Francisco Standard, to get his point across. The money spent will hardly make a dent in what's said to be the tech mogul's $5 billion bank account.

Moritz believes the City's liberal values, as old as the Gold Rush that brought the first large wave of settlers to town, are responsible for the troubling conditions on city streets. Those very values made San Francisco a perfect laboratory for the business experiments that made Moritz, a British émigré who, like others before him, came here to make his fortune. He is a very wealthy man.

Today, he's using all the influence money can buy to demand an end to what he believes is the City's soft approach to the drug crisis. His frustration – and that of many San Franciscans – is understandable: During the first five months of 2023, 346 died from drug overdoses, a more than 40% increase from the same time last year. Of those, 80% succumbed to the deadly effects of fentanyl.

"It's a strange city that bans plastic straws but permits plastic needles," Moritz complained in an opinion piece that ran in the Financial Times. "Yet that's San Francisco today." In an interview with SF Gate, Moritz's right-hand, Kanishka Cheng, doubled down on her boss's belief that the City must take a more muscular approach. "We've been supporting … the idea that law enforcement has to play a role because we're seeing fewer and fewer instances of people opting into treatment," Cheng said. "There needs to be a tool to compel people into treatment."

Moritz has a found a willing ear in Mayor London Breed – no surprise given the mayor faces reelection next year and a billionaire's deep pockets can swing elections. Breed and her hand-picked district attorney, Brooke Jenkins, are reviving the "war on drugs," an effort that's seen the United States spend at least a trillion dollars to little avail.

The plan is doomed. Forced treatment, as addiction experts point out, has a long history of failure.

"The literature does not support mandatory treatment on any level to help the public health situation," said Daniel Ciccarone, a physician and professor of family community medicine at the University of California at San Francisco, who studies drug addiction. A 2015 meta-analysis that studied involuntary treatment around the world found that "evidence does not … suggest improved outcomes related to compulsory treatment approaches, with some studies suggesting potential harms."

Last December, Breed launched a trial run of her aggressive new approach, declaring a state of emergency in the troubled Tenderloin. She flooded the neighborhood with police officers, arresting drug dealers and users, alike. The result was this: Drug sales and use moved into other neighborhoods, especially South of Market. For her part, Jenkins has failed to secure prosecutions for drug-related offenses.

The difficult truth is that San Francisco's drug crisis will not be solved overnight. It will require an unwavering commitment to evidence-based solutions like harm-reduction sites that keep people alive while healthcare professionals gain the kind of trust that leads to successful treatment. It will involve the creation of supportive housing (with no strings attached) for drug-users living on the streets.

It has been proven that when people have a stable home, they can address other problems in their lives. That policy, known as Housing First, has been embraced on the federal level by presidents as different as George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Today, like other evidence-based solutions, it's under attack by the far right.

San Francisco's Department of Public Health and the mayor's office have engineered seven plans to address the City's drug crisis. They incorporate evidence-based solutions. To date, none have been fully implemented. Moritz has fundamentally misunderstood the problem: It's not one of policy failure.

The first iteration of Moritz's "That's Fentalife!" ad disparaged Narcan, a vital medicine for treating opioid overdoses. It was blasted for its insensitivity. Not to be dissuaded, he replaced them with versions that omitted any mention of Narcan.

The first ad was a blunder; the second, not much better. Moritz, a billionaire, can afford costly mistakes. San Francisco, still in the throes of an economic crisis, cannot.

Julie Pitta is a member of the executive board of the Berniecrats. She is a former senior editor for Forbes Magazine and staff writer for the Los Angeles Times. Email: julie.pitta@gmail.com. Twitter: @juliepitta. Find an archive of her columns online at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

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